

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 081260

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APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA:ALATHERTON,JR.

S/S: M.TANNER

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TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

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NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION

1. PLEASE CONVEY TO MOBAREK FOR SADAT AND FAHMY, AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY.

2. THE SECRETARY WANTS TO INFORM PRESIDENT SADAT AND FAHMY THAT THE U.S. RECEIVED ON APRIL 2 A MESSAGE FROM THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT REFERRING TO AMERICAN NAVAL SHIPS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. THE SOVIETS ASSERT A POLICY ON THEIR PART OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN LEBANESE AFFAIRS AND SAY THEY EXPECT THE SAME FROM OTHERS. THEY POINT TO THE DANGERS OF INTERNAL CRISIS IN LEBANON BECOMING A SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT. WE ARE REPLYING TO THE MESSAGE, SAYING THAT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 081260

WE ARE SUPPORTING EFFORTS FOR A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND

URGING OTHER COUNTRIES TO REFRAIN FROM INTERVENING. WE POINT OUT TO THE SOVIETS THAT IN SUPPORTING LOCAL GROUPS, THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY FOR SEEING THAT THESE GROUPS EXERCISE RESTRAINT, AND THAT WE BELIEVE ALL RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENTS MUST DO ALL THEY CAN TO PREVAIL UPON THE FACTIONS IN LEBANON TO SEEK A POLITICAL SOLUTION AND REFRAIN FROM FURTHER FIGHTING. SO LONG AS OTHERS EXERCISE RESTRAINT, WE CONCLUDE, WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THE DANGERS OF A WIDER CONFLICT CAN BE AVERTED.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESENCE OF OUR NAVAL VESSELS IN THE AREA, SADAT AND FAHMY SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY ARE IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN FOR THE POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF EVACUATION, IN THE REGRETTABLE EVENT THE NEED SHOULD ARISE, AND AS A WARNING TO THE SOVIETS.

4. THE SECRETARY WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY TO SADAT AND FAHMY WITH SOME URGENCY THE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AS IT IS DEVELOPING. WE NOW HAVE A CEASEFIRE, BUT IT IS A STRICTLY LIMITED PERIOD IN WHICH A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT AND IMPORTANT STEPS MUST BE TAKEN IF FIGHTING IS NOT TO RESUME. THE CONSTITUTION MUST BE AMENDED, A NEW PRESIDENT ELECTED AND AT LEAST A BEGINNING MADE ON THE RESOLUTION OF SOME OF THE BASIC ISSUES INVOLVED IN THE DISPUTE. WE BELIEVE THAT A FOUNDATION WAS LAID FOR SUCH RESOLUTION WITH THE COMPROMISE WORKED OUT IN LATE JANUARY, BUT WE ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT THE LEBANESE FACTIONS WILL REVERT TO THEIR UNCOMPROMISING WAYS NOW THAT THERE IS A CEASEFIRE.

5. IN HIS TALK WITH AMBASSADOR BROWN YESTERDAY, JUMBLATT SPELLED OUT HIS PROGRAM OF SOCIAL REFORMS AND HIS AIM OF TURNING LEBANON INTO A MULTI-PARTY, WESTERN, LEBANESE DEMOCRACY. WHATEVER ONE MIGHT THINK OF THE MERITS OF THESE CHANGES, THEY ARE CLEARLY NOT REALISTIC IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION, AS BROWN TOLD HIM. JUMBLATT REPLIED, HOWEVER, THAT HE CANNOT RULE OUT THE RETURN TO ARMS IF THERE WERE NO "GENUINE REFORM" THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 081260

6. THE SECRETARY BELIEVES THERE IS A REAL DANGER THAT THE LEBANESE, IF LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES, WILL BE UNABLE TO SETTLE THESE COMPLICATED MATTERS IN A SUFFICIENTLY SHORT TIME AND THAT FIGHTING WILL RESUME. THE PRINCIPAL DANGER IS THAT JUMBLATT WILL COMMENCE HOSTILITIES IN AN EFFORT TO FORCE HIS EXTENSIVE CHANGES ON THE CHRISTIANS. IN SUCH A SITUATION, WE WOULD SEE A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION, DESPITE THE

EFFORTS THE U.S. WOULD MAKE. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS WE POINTED OUT IN OUR MESSAGE TO YOU YESTERDAY, WE ASSUME THE SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON WILL DIMINISH IF THERE IS NO FURTHER FIGHTING.

7. THE SECRETARY, THEREFORE, URGES PRESIDENT SADAT TO USE ALL OF HIS INFLUENCE WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK TO IMPRESS ON THE LEBANESE FACTIONS THE NEED FOR COMPROMISE AND FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE. IN PARTICULAR, WE BELIEVE THIS MESSAGE MUST BE GOTTEN ACROSS TO JUMBLATT AND TO ARAFAT. AS WE SEE IT, IF ULTIMATE SYRIAN INTERVENTION IS TO BE PREVENTED, THESE LEADERS MUST BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT REASONABLE COMPROMISES AND TO REFRAIN FROM FURTHER HOSTILITIES.

8. THE SECRETARY LOOKS FORWARD TO HEARING FROM PRESIDENT SADAT AND FAHMY REGARDING THEIR VIEWS ON THE CURRENT, POSSIBLY DECISIVE PERIOD IN LEBANON. KISSINGER

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